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ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAST

EPIISODE
152

Alex Ikonn

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John Bowen and Alex Ikonn

Episode #152

Dear Fellow Entrepreneur,

We are thrilled that you have joined us here at AES Nation, where we're dedicated to accelerating entrepreneurial success—your success.

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Best of success,



John Bowen
Co-founder, AES Nation

John Bowen: As entrepreneurs, we all want to make a difference. We want to make a huge difference. Once we've nailed the client experience, whether it's a product, it's manufacturing, or professional services, we want to reach out, go from one to many. I tell you, I've got an individual, a really remarkable entrepreneur who has shown me an amazing way to use social media and the tools around all the Internet. He's a great example for us. He's here today to really share with us how you, an already successful entrepreneur, can use those same tools. Alex Ikonn is again a remarkable entrepreneur. He has been very successful with his wife on YouTube. They have millions of followers. We're going to talk about their business Luxy Hair that they have.

In addition, I didn't even know this, but one of my favorite books of all time, it's a journal, it's a 5-minute journal. Many of you are using it. Alex is a cofounder of that as well as he's got a new kick starter campaign coming out. It is out and I've already signed up for it Alex, productivity planner. He is one of the most effective young entrepreneurs out there and he's here with us today to help you be even more successful. Stay tuned. I'm John Bowen, AES Nation. We're all about accelerating your success.

Alex, I am so excited to have you here. You and I met at Jayson Gaignard's mastermind talk. Sat down at a round table. You and your wife were kind enough to share with us some of your secrets. It was like, I was blown away with how much success you have had and continue to, I mean, the difference you're making in the world.

Alex Ikonn: Thank you so much John. I'm really happy to be here and say how we do it.

John: Before we dive in, you've got a 4-part formula for success that you share. It's really powerful. We're going to give not only the formula but how you can actually make it happen. I want to get the back story. Alex, you cut a video not that long ago that you have on the Internet. Matter of fact, I'm going to pull it up just really quick in a second to show them. Why don't you tell a little of your back story?

Alex: Sure, yeah. Jason, who you said you've been to his event, where we both had mastermind talks, Jason has always been pushing me to tell my back story. I have this really I guess preppy image. A lot of people think I come from wealth, from money, from a very secure background, but it's not the reality. I come from immigrant parents, my parents immigrated from Russia when I was about 9 years old to Canada. I initially thought I was coming to the United States because that's the land of opportunity. Instead I saw a Canadian flag with a maple leaf. I'm like, what's going on? We're not in the US. Regardless, it was a still a great land of opportunity and I had to make the best of it.

My parents really divorced, so I was really raised by a single mother. It was a very tough upbringing because my mom, she couldn't provide for us so she had to work a factory job. A lot of times growing up as a teenager I was alone. Also, although my stepfather who came into my life a little later on, he wasn't there for a long time either because he passed away shortly. Shortly after, my parents actually got back together. Then my father passed away as well. There was a lot of loss and tragedy really in my life in those early pivotal stages, especially not having a father figure in my life. It was tough I think for a lot of people growing up.

However, at the same time, probably really shaped me to become the person that I am today. It allowed me to really have the strength and the will and the independence to be able to be at the stage where I'm at today. I just the whole thing to my back story is I've always had to look for ways how to look for positivity in the bad. You can really go 2 ways. When obstacles or challenges come into your life you can really look at them and say, there's these clouds over me and I'm this unlucky person, you create this. Or you can choose to look at it a different way like I have and see what good or how can I use this in a more beneficial way.

The way I've done it is what has allowed me to even go over grief in the beginning is really gratitude. Meaning even having gratitude to understand that, I'm lucky enough as a person I'll say at that young age to even had a father for 16, 17 years' age of my life. A lot of people don't even have fathers. Those kinds of mind shifts have allowed me to really see the power of gratitude and how we can really help us to have a different outlook on life, which has led to creating products let's say like the 5-minute journal, and also looking at how we can help other people in general.

All in all, I guess from the background, it's a pure immigrant story, not having a lot of support from parents. The only support that I can really have is the love of my mother. I can say, I told her all the time. That alone was the biggest wealth that I've ever received in my life was just receiving that love from my mother growing up. I think as anybody listening, especially if you're a parent, the biggest gift you can give to your kids is really not let's say the money, the gifts you can give them, is really the time. Even if you don't have a lot of time, my mother didn't have a lot of time with me also growing up. Anytime that she had with me was very present, it was very loving. That's what allowed me really to become a successful entrepreneur you could say is really that love and caring in that even little amount of time.

John: Alex, one of the things, I did know you did do the 5-minute journal when I started using it. It was passed around by probably some of mutual friends that we have. They were raving about it. I started doing it, and you were one of the first guys to get me to really appreciate fully gratitude and the power, I had always done it subconsciously. It's hard to be an entrepreneur who gets knocked down, there are plenty of things to knock you down. You don't even have to be an entrepreneur. Nobody gets out of life unscarred. Really creating that formal structure, I knew it had to be somebody that had had some challenges and put some discipline in their life and really took off. Thank you for that. We're going to show that and how you can get more information about that in a little bit.

Alex, what I'd like to dive into, I was sitting around the table. There's probably about 20 of us at Jason's mastermind talk. Your wife and you were presenting and sharing a little on YouTube how you do it. It was like, everybody's leaning in, notes are being taken like crazy. I asked if I could record it. It wasn't a great quality recording but I did transcribe it and I went through. There were a lot of pearls of wisdom. Maybe before we go into your fore overview, your drivers of success, just describe a little bit of the business that you're doing. Then I want to talk about, what we want, it's unlikely any of the entrepreneurs are competing with you here. Even if they are, you're doing what you're doing. There's so many lessons across every business. My primary business is coaching top financial advisors. I just got so many insights out of that. Describe the business. I'm not sure I would do it justice.

Alex: Sure, yeah. We run multiple businesses. I guess the first one, the first true success was, let's see here. That business was started and cofounded with my wife Mimi and her sister Layla. We started that in 2010. That was really prior to everything really catching on, meaning Twitter and Facebook let's say or YouTube wasn't as high profile as it is now. It's growing. There's still so much room to grow really, it's just the beginning, even 5 years from that day. What happened was previously to that I was really astounded by just the power of social media. I was actually laid off, fired from my ICBM banking. I actually wanted to be in finance and become the whole investment banking route. That didn't really happen for me. That's a whole different story.

John: I have plenty of financial guys that want to be in your space.

Alex: I can just tell anybody listening, I wanted to become either a director in a bank or an investment banker or advisor, anything financial, I love finance. However, being fired was one of the greatest things that happened to me. A lot of times, I always had that

entrepreneurial drive, but a lot of us, we don't want to burn the bridges and to really risk that. In that time, somebody did it for me. Someone fired me, it was once again my outlook. It was like the greatest thing. Of course it was very painful at the moment, but looking back it was the greatest thing that happened. That's when really I started thinking, okay, what else is happening now?

My realization then was I never want to work for a corporation again. I understood that I'm just a number at that place. It's not really about, they don't really look at that banking institution, who was the actual, why does this happen let's say or how can we actually make this person and use all their talents and stuff like that? What I'm trying to say is, I then started getting curious about social media and this power of it. It was then I tried to become a social media consultant. I was actually a failed social media consultant. Back then everyone's looking at social media consultant like snake oil salesman, you guys don't know nothing, what are you guys talking about, social media is a joke. I wasn't really able to sell my services.

John: Unfortunately, so many social media people thought that because they have a LinkedIn profile and a Facebook account, they were social media consultants. Even today there is a lot of social media consultants who don't deliver much value.

Alex: I guess. For me I decided, you know what, if you guys don't trust me, I'm going to have to go out myself to show that these things actually work. That's what we did. We started Luxy Hair, my wife came to me and she complained about, we're getting married and she complained to me she bought these hair extensions for the wedding, clip-in hair extensions. She's like, they're crap, she complained to her sister. I was in the room and I saw her communicate her frustration to her sister. Then right away a spark came off. I asked, I was curious. I asked, "What's the product?" Because I know nothing about hair extensions. How did you find out about it, what did you, and just asked more questions?

Then she told me, "These are crap." However, there are these girls on YouTube who talk about products and show different ways to style or whatever. In the UK that's where it was more, the industry was a lot more ahead. However, there was nobody in the US truly delivering the product that was not in the marketing which was more hair, more volume for a really good price. Nobody was really doing it in the US. You had to be shipped over from the UK. When we actually ordered it ourselves it still wasn't up to the quality that we wanted it to be.

That's where we saw the opportunity. The first business was the beauty business, e-commerce business, Luxyhair.com which sells clip and hair extensions for women. The way that we grew that business was with Mimi and her sister Layla to create video tutorials once a week on her YouTube channel. That grew to be one of the biggest hair channels on YouTube. I think we're now over 2 and a half million subscribers, over a quarter of a billion views. The whole how to content that we created is how to create a braid or how to create a Kim Kardashian inspired hair style, whatever it may be, or Victoria's Secret angels her style.

John: Actually, with my hair I have looked at it. I didn't buy any extensions; I didn't think I had enough to tie anything in. Alex, it's so amazing that it's very much an educational one. It's not a pitch fast or anything like that. To have as many subscribers that you have, and the sales that come out of it, I think that's one of the things that really guys, I just turned 60, we look at that and it doesn't seem possible. That's really why I wanted to have you wanted to have you on today because it's possible in every segment. The audiences, it's not all young woman that are about ready to have a wedding that watches YouTube, it's everybody type thing.

Alex: Oh, everybody. Actually, I believe I recall these statistics, but one of the biggest growing demographics especially on YouTube is people over 60. Really we talked a few about this earlier just before we were recording this. I really recommend everybody to be out and creating some sort of content and building their old personal brand. Whether that is creating a podcast like you're doing right here or creating you to content with YouTube videos, or you can even vlogging on YouTube, which we can talk about as well, or blogging. Whatever it may be. Really the most important thing is to understand, and I can get into it when we get into the little formula that I have.

John: Let's dive into the formula Alex. You have a 4-part formula that is one of the things that is blindingly obvious only after the fact type thing. The market has responded. What I'd like to do is have you give your 4 parts of the formula, then let's go through each time and talk about what you're doing in your businesses to ensure that component. Then also what other your fellow entrepreneurs who are either watching or listening to this, what they can do to accomplish that. What are these 4 not secret formula but really powerful formula components?

Alex: It's all very simple. The same thing you'll say even with the 5-minute journal, most people when they look at the 5-minute journal, they're like, this is so simple, how did I not

think of this? It's all in the simplicity. With the formula, what happened, just a little back story to it. It probably took 2 to 3 years for me to pause and say, what's going on? Then we're making, we have over let's say a million subscribers, we have millions of views, millions of dollars. We're like, okay, that was one of my other things. I know I'm not special. One of my biggest things is that I don't think I have some talent or anything, I'm honestly just an average guy who just observes different things and just uses it.

Then I also started observing, what is it that made let's say that YouTube channel Luxy Hair successful? What makes other YouTube channels successful? What makes any content creators out there successful? What is it? What do we do as content creators that allowed us to really jump out at millions of people who are trying to create content? We're really in the top 1%. Then I said, okay, I broke it down. I know what this is. The formula is QVCA.

The first one, and it's actually inspired off of the way I rearrange the letters is actually inspired off of QVC. QVC is the largest shopping network in the world and they make billions of dollars. However, when I look at QVC, I think it's a dying model. I can't relate to QVC; I'll never buy anything on QVC myself. I think the new generation that's coming up right now is more, they like to be approached in a different way. The way that we approach our audience. Like you said, it's not sales-y, there's 2 easy payments of 1999, there's 20 minutes counting down, there's none of that stuff. We don't even say buy in our videos. You can probably watch all our videos and we've never said buy, which is pretty incredible.

The first one, the formula is called QVCA, new way of selling without selling. The first letter is Q, quality. Why I put quality first is that a lot of people actually, when I talk about quality actually want to make the emphasis on a lot of people don't start because they think they need to have this overproduction, they need to have these 2 cameras, what they see on TV is what they should be producing and creating. They're like, I don't have money for that, I don't have these professional things, I don't have this professional editing software, and they don't start.

The reality is what would be on YouTube, the more you overproduce your videos, if you do stuff like QVC on YouTube, it won't work. Honestly, companies are spending millions of dollars on this high produced content and it's not working on YouTube. What's working on YouTube is actually quality that is not too high but also not too low. It's right there in the middle. There's a lot of equipment that you can buy it for under sometimes 500 bucks, even

1000 bucks where you can get a really nice set up that will allow you to produce videos that speak well and resonate with the audience on YouTube.

With the quality, it's very important that the quality is actually not overproduced, that it's actually real. YouTube is all about you. It's getting a glimpse into that realism. On TV before people would ignore whoever person's watching. For example, right now if you're watching this, you'll see that I'm speaking directly to you. It's not me and John talking to each other and ignoring the audience. We're actually breaking that paradigm and speaking directly to you who's either watching or listening. That's who we really, really want to resonate to. It's not just the conversation between us, but it's in a way of communicating with the people together with the people.

With quality what I want to mention of course, the quality of the content still has to be high. Which translates to the next point, which is a V, value. First one is quality, second one is V, value. Value, when I talk about your content has to still be quality, that it provides value to people. A lot of people, a lot of what the corporations or organizations or just and individuals, where they get it wrong is they start let's a podcast or they start a YouTube channel because they want to get something out of it. I get it, when we start our business we want our business to grow, we want to make money.

However, being able to in that early generation of social media, I really listen closely to people for example like Seth Godin and people like Gary Vaynerchuk starting out where they really preached about the importance of giving value and not expecting anything back, doing things unconditionally. A lot of people, they'll start, I'll do 5 videos and they're like, it's not working, okay, bye, and they leave. The most important thing, there's that body language of you trying to get something. You know what I mean? The thing is even me doing this podcast, I have no financial interest, I'm really here to deliver value.

In everything that we've really done, any of our YouTube channels or our YouTube videos, even our products, our whole mission is really, how can we deliver more value to people? Even when we're reorganizing our website or doing something else, we're always seeing how can we provide more value in a way that will help the other person? The major point about value that I really want to say is that it's all about in a way responses ...

John: That's what I was going to talk about Alex, because the law of reciprocity I just love. Really much of the marketing that I learned, it was really very early on before all this stuff

that we're talking about. It was a classic push marketing. You're really selling. There were limited opportunities to get things. The Internet has become the greatest facilitator in the world. If you want a hair extension you can Google and you're going to end up on your YouTube channel, you're going to listen. With all this value you're going to go to Mimi and say I'm going to buy it from her, or why would I drive somewhere type thing.

I think so often we in business forget that. Oh, we got to have this whole funnel, we got to have everything, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Creating this value, you guys have done that. I'm going to go back to the Q too. We're doing a podcast here. You're in London, I'm in Silicon Valley. We're doing it over Skype, it's free. I've got a camcorder, a nice mic, a few other things switching here. Maybe \$2500 worth of stuff. That would be an expensive studio for a lot. You can do it for about 500 bucks. The value you can get out there and have people, really now all of a sudden you're pulling them to you and they want to be part of your group. That reciprocity is just so powerful. You guys have done it so well.

Alex: Exactly. Really the most important piece is still, it has to come genuine, which I'll get to that point as well. The first one is quality, value. Just finishing on that value piece, the way we did it, we produce these hair tutorials online. Our videos were not a sales pitch. If you watch our videos, they were just showing people how to create different hairstyles. Meaning if you have really long hair and you don't need our product, you will still get value from our videos. What happens many times is even if they don't need our product, however because we have helped them, when they have a friend who's asking and saying, "Hey I'm getting married and I'm looking for hair extensions." They'll say "Oh, check out Mimi. I watched her videos, they're really great people. They have this business." Really it's the value in the story that we provide that has really driven our business throughout the years. It's pretty incredible. That's value.

However, going to the next point, you can have quality, you can have value. If you cannot this third thing, you might not as well do anything. That third thing is consistency. A lot of content creators, they start but they're not consistent. What I mean by that, like I said earlier, they'll just do 5 videos and they'll stop or they'll do videos randomly. Let's say they'll do maybe once a month or on every 2, 3, 4, 6 weeks, 8 weeks, maybe 5 months. What we have to understand is that people have already, big media has already spent trillions of dollars probably on training people to expect what's coming next.

When we're all growing up, let's say for me I knew what time the Simpsons was on when I was growing up, and I was expecting it. I'm like, oh, I'm so looking forward to the Simpsons on Sunday night or whatever it may be. The same thing with people. When you create content you want to create a certain consistent pattern. For some people it can be daily. You're like, I create daily content. If you're that ambitious and you do it, awesome. There are daily vloggers that are super popular and successful. At the very least is what I recommend for most people is just doing for example 1 video or 1 podcast or 1 blog post a week, so weekly content.

Weekly content, especially if you have it on a certain date, say at the end of the video, say, "Hey, thank you guys for watching, I'm looking forward to seeing you guys next Wednesday, I create videos every week." You let people know. They subscribe for more content. Now there's a reason for them to subscribe and they know that, hey, there's going to be more content coming up. The same thing for example, the reason I say that if you even created amazing quality valuable video and they go on your channel or your podcast, whatever it may be, and then they see that the last time you created something was a year ago, would you subscribe to that person? No, because you know that there's no certainty when the next content is coming out. That's about consistency.

The thing I want to add about consistency is also about creating consistent content with a consistent message. Meaning for our business, and this is really important for businesses, if you are for example a financial advisor, then your videos should be about finance. It should be about helping people with just their finances let's say, and it should be tailored towards that. That's what we did for example. We were one of the first channels who just focused on hair. Before there was beauty, these YouTubers would create makeup routines, what to wear in a day, all that stuff. However, it's really when we drilled down and we just did one thing, we became known for something. We were the hair experts all of a sudden. This is just an important point for people starting out is that you want to have consistent content that comes out consistently but also consistent message. You may say right now we're also seeing the rise of for example of vlogging and personal branding. That's a little different.

That's where I also, if you check out my channel, it's all over the place right now. However, I still have a consistent message which is to overall help for example young people starting out, whether it be they want to start a business or how to be successful. I always drop tips on how to live a better life and be more successful daily in my videos.

That content is different than new emerging content of vlogging, and you can look into that. There's some things you can check out that I recommend. However, that's more of a personal brand. However, if you want to build a business and you want to build content around your business, it's very valuable if it's consistent. It will allow you to better convert people because you become known for something. That's quality value.

John: Alex, let me do consistent just for a second too. I found I'll start a project and it was really attempted to a few videos and you're done. You've now done it. Where it really came, and I'm now doing in the financial advisor community, we're doing 100 webinars a year. It's generating an awful lot. I'm doing the AES podcast, just started a financial advisor one. What I love is particularly in the podcast, the videos that we're putting out, the distribution that we can have, that they're evergreen. They can stay there forever. When somebody doesn't, if they didn't hear your first YouTube post, they can come 3 years later and they'll find one they like. A lot of times they'll go back and start listening. All of a sudden they're now part of your community. There's just no other media that we could do to have something like that that would be that cost-effective.

Alex: I highly, this is another tip for anybody listening is you want to create evergreen content. The best way to start is really look for what people are already looking for. That's what we did at the beginning as well. We would look for, back then it was reviews were really popular. Our first video ever was a review of a really popular product back then which was let's say a hair straightener, or let's say Kim Kardashian was really popular at one point. That's what the girls created videos on how to create a certain Kim Kardashian look, because people are looking for it. You can also create content for example that is not only current to the moment, you can also create content that has even more evergreen. How to create a certain braid? Everyone forever will always be looking how to create a certain hairstyle or a certain braid. The same thing for example in finance, everyone is always going to be looking for ways to invest their money in a certain strategy. That's what people will look for.

Going to the last point, and this honestly, you can have quality, you can have value, you can have consistency. This last piece is the most important. The last piece is authenticity. This is really, we're in this age right now, this is why YouTube is becoming even more popular than television. This is why so many people are now making this regular content. More and more people are gravitating towards this new content. Why are they doing it? Whether it be let's say podcast production or anybody else, why choose that over professional medium?

People choose that because they're sick and tired of puppets in a way. They want to connect to real people. That's why YouTube like I said is all about you. If you are able to really show your real self as a person as you are, and show maybe even your flaws, leave out some bloopers or whatever it may be, it will really help people to connect with you. Like you said, the interim now is really this platform where people, it's going back to, it's nothing new really. It's actually just going back to the humanness of people and who we really are. That's what I mean by authenticity. Authenticity is how can you really display and show, and this is a journey that you will really be on, is display the real you.

That's what we're talking about earlier. Maybe some people think I'm too old to go on and create vlogs maybe, or I'm too old to create YouTube videos or whatever it may be, you're not. People will be able to better connect with you because let's say you're their age. You've gone through the same difficulties. If you can be authentic enough to share your experiences, let's say maybe even your hardships in the content you create and let other people connect with you in that way, then a guy like me will never be able to connect with a certain type of people just because I'm not exactly like them.

I was recently I think last year at an event with Seth Godin in New York. He always said there's a whole thing like people like us. What I mean by that is people still gravitate towards people that are similar to them. What I mean is we have a friend in Toronto, Carmen, she's an Asian woman. She says, "You know what, when I pick out my hair color, I look out for the Asian one. I don't look for the white girls." What I mean by that is, why to me it was mind blowing and insightful, you can say whatever you want but people still want to have content that are people that are similar to them. Meaning as you are, certain views that you may have about finance, politics, about society, about anything you have, people will gravitate towards you because you're like them.

In a world of 7 billion people, this is an incredible opportunity that we can be able to really connect to a lot of people that are similar to us. It also leaves opportunity for us to also connect to all humankind around the world, although there is that hyper niche that you may have and allow you to connect. At the same time, authenticity of just you showing your humanness through the camera, whatever it is, it's about being vulnerable sometimes or whatever it may be, it connects to everybody. That's what the authenticity piece and how I want to finish it off with is just people go to YouTube for, at the end of the day it's connection. It's not even content. They want to feel connected to somebody else because there's just not a lot, we want to see more genuine people out there.

John: There's so much value in that. We talk about the power of storytelling. It's all about authenticity. We want to work with real people. Most of us are so alienated in the world. We have a missed opportunity. So many successful entrepreneurs want to be just so polished and everything perfect and script and so on. When you look at some of the most successful, matter of fact the very first videos we did, I had a video editor and they're slicing it up and all this and so on. I said, "No, stop doing that." Matter of fact we don't edit any of our videos now unless there's some major part. The reason for that is we're real people. If you want somebody that's an anchor person that can read a teleprompter, that's great, but that's not what we want to work with.

Alex, let me do a switch here. I want to go to this segment on resources. I got to tell you, you've got a lot of resources that I want to point out to the entrepreneurs. Let me put up on screen the 5-minute journal. This is one of my favorite tools out there. It's actually a great gift for any time of year to share this. Alex, tell us a little bit about what this is and how it comes together, where people can use it.

Alex: Sure. I'm not sure if you're showing the website right now, we might be sold out.

John: Right now it says on back order. This is an evergreen one. Go to the website fiveminutejournal.com. We'll have all the links at AES Nation and how to get all this stuff and so on that Alex and I are talking about.

Alex: Yeah, sure. It's really a tremendous product in a way just that it has grown organically. Like you said, mostly people through gifting it to family members. It's really a thoughtful gift. The way it really started was I cofounded with my friend you UJ Ramdas, and of course with Mimi's help. My wife is a partner in every way. On every project she helps us out. The way it started was growing up like you, I practice gratitude with my mind. Meaning I trained myself to as soon as I wake up to think of things I'm grateful for, or I'll be in the shower and I'm doing this. Really I train myself to do this. I can really say that a lot of the things that have transpired and I've created in my life is because of that, is because of that mindset that I instilled.

Also when I started dating my wife I realized that there's a lot of negative messages that people have received in their life, whether it be through media or through their parents or whatever it is. There's always these things that are sent to us in our minds and a lot of times

that are negative. People have a lot of negative self-talk. Me and UJ really thought, how can we create something that can help people re-establish and help create a new mind?

That's why we really call the 5-minute journal the toothbrush for your mind. What happens when you don't brush your teeth every day? It rots. You'll get cavities and things won't be pretty. The same thing will happen; people don't understand that the same happens to your mind if you don't do the work daily to brush it. There's a great Zig Ziegler quote that says, some people say motivation doesn't last. So doesn't bathing, that's why we do it daily. It's the same kind of attitude.

This is why 5-minute journal is the thing you do in the morning and at night. In the morning you have 3 questions which are I'm grateful for, dot dot dot, 3 things you list, the things you're grateful for. Then 2, what will make today great? This part, once again, you train your mind to already say, okay, what are the things that I will do that will make today great? You look forward to the day. All this is put together with, we studied a lot of books on positive psychology and really want to put these things that will enable you to train your mind.

The reason I say this is because there's a lot of books out there where we noticed was, it's great, there's a lot of books that tell you what to do, how to be happy. There's no really guide, a thing that you can actually do to actually implement those things that people recommend in those positive psychology books. Things like journaling, things like gratitude, things like looking forward to your day, or the third thing of the morning part, things like your daily affirmation. Reaffirm who you want to be let's say in your life. You can say I'm the greatest stockbroker of all time, I'm not sure. Whatever it may be for financially related people.

This is I'll say the best portion really. Even if you just do it, even this night portion, you don't even need the journal, you can do it yourself with your partner or yourself is list 3 amazing things that happened today. Honestly just this question alone is such a game changer. A lot of times people finish their day and they think of all the negative stuff that happened. Even if they say they are, they talk to their partner and they'll be like, "Oh, how's your day, honey?" Then they'll get into all the bad stuff. Why do we do this? It's important to retrain your mind.

That question, 3 amazing things that happened today forces you to, you even if your day was bad, it forces you to still look for the good in that day. I promise there's still something good you can see in the day. Whether it be the sun was shining or it started raining in

California or whatever it may be that positively affected your day. The last one is how can I make today better. Really this format you can do yourself, you don't even need the journal. We have it all on our website as well. Overall it's a technique for people to do to create a new mindset.

John: Alex, we're running out of time. I want to do just a quick one on the productivity planner too because you just launched that at the time of this recording. The 5-minute journal I love. There is no entrepreneur that shouldn't at least have it. You go, I can do this on my own. Yeah, it just gives you the framework and it's the perfect tool for that and you can do it on your own, but get the book to see how they've laid it out. I love really at the end of the day just doing, I have very big in the morning and the end of the day, those 2 things, just how life is so grand. It's just so grand. What about this productivity? Now that we've got such a great life, we're going to make it even better. What's the productivity planner?

Alex: Yeah. Quickly productivity planner, we had a Kickstarter that was really successful and we're launching the product later on this month. It will be shipping out. The productivity planner is really all about, how do you structure your day to actually get things done? Meaning it's all good about 5-minute journal, it really helps you to set your mindset. As we all know it's not just about thinking positive, it's all about what are your daily actions. What are you actually doing to create these things real in your life?

With the productivity planner, we really just simplified it. UJ and I, he introduced me to the Pomodoro technique. The Pomodoro technique quickly is working 25 increments of time. A lot of times right now we're multitasking, we're trying to do all the things at once. In reality your mind is not made to work on many things at once. It is made to do one thing. With the help of the Pomodoro technique you set a timer for 25 minutes and focus on doing one thing at a time.

What we did is we married that technique with the Ivy Lee method. For those of you who don't know, the Ivy Lee method introduced back in the day to Charles Schwab, not the finance guy but the steel guy, Bethlehem Steel. He hired Ivy Lee method to say, "How do I make my employees more productive?" He said, "Okay, I'm going to give you a method. You put it to use and you pay me whatever you think it's worth after you put it into practice." All he told him to do is give your people a maximum of 3 to 5 tasks a day with the most important task being first. You only move to the second task after you have done the most important task first. That's it, that's the Ivy Lee method. Charles Schwab then gave Ivy Lee I

believe it was \$25,000 at that time, equivalent now of over 200 something thousand dollars just for 25 minutes.

John: I think it was written on one piece of paper too. That was a lot of money back then.

Alex: Exactly, but it was because it was so helpful. It allowed Charles Schwab to become one of the richest people in the world, really. We married those two, the Ivy Lee method and doing the Pomodoro technique into one. We created our whole thing with that company, Intelligent produces the 5-minute journal and productivity planner. Our whole mission really is to simplify products and to make them so that you really want to do it. All these things you can do by yourself. Whether it be the 5-minute journal or the productivity planner, you can start implementing these today by yourself. You don't need to buy anything. The only reason we do what we do is because I'm a very aesthetic guy. What I mean by that is I like things in pretty packages that are well made. I personally design the 5-minute journal and the productivity planner in a way that, honestly, I created these products for myself, honestly.

John: It does show Alex, the productivity planner. I'm a pretty organized guy, I looked at it and I go, I don't really need this. Then you had it on the Kickstarter that you could download it or Jason's something. I looked at it and I go, oh, I got to order a bunch of these. They're so damn nice looking.

Alex: Exactly. It's a good way to introduce yourself to these concepts.

John: Yeah, I think it's a great way to get started. Let me bring it all together in the last segment. Alex, I really do appreciate you being here with us. These are the key takeaways. I might just go and repeat the 4 big drivers of success that Alex talked about quality in everything you do. You want to have great quality. Particularly on the Internet, not overproduced. You don't need to do super bowl ads for instance. The technology today, it's relatively inexpensive, but it's that quality that is whatever is right for your audience.

Value, this is the law of reciprocity. As capital markets, we know as entrepreneurs delivering more value, we get great returns by delivering value to others. Sometimes we want to have it on every transaction. You don't need that. Consistency, this is the Internet is a vast world. I don't know how many pages are out there, 7 billion people in the world I believe, there's somewhere around 3 1/2 billion using the Internet now. It's growing. Everything is growing.

The opportunity, whatever your segment is to consistently reach them, I can't think of a better way of doing it. Then authenticity, this is the power of your personal story, your persona. People are alienated, we want to connect.

Alex, this has been phenomenal. I want to thank you sincerely. I wish you and your wife continued success in everything you're doing. To all our entrepreneurs, let's go out and execute on this. You can get all the links that Alex and I talked about, AES Nation. I'm expecting Alex for them to be much more full of gratitude, recognize how great their lives are, and become extremely productive the next 12 months. Thank you again.

A Second Opinion on Your Finances

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